1: Child M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

mbundu, they have not, independent of some related elder, generally been very successful within the kinship group.

There is another factor in the situation of the Ngendo out-station which has tended to preserve the ties of kinship between the villagers of the two groups. The support of the two leaders is very largely found locally. Neither teacher nor elder has ever received more than a very occasional bonus from either the native church or the mission. They carry on by the help of the local people and through their own efforts. Dr. Gutmann holds that it is the schools which are most disruptive in their influence on African social structure because of their organization and the way in which they are carried on. A school, he says, should reflect the organic connexions of native society and enter into reciprocal relations with the folk group. Instead, he points out, this is being made impossible in East Africa by raising the salaries of the teachers until they are removed from the ordinary life of the rest of the people.[1] This cleavage between educated individuals who should be leaders and the masses of the people seems to have reached an even more markedly advanced stage in South Africa, according to Mrs. Hoernlé, Eiselen, and others who also seek remedies in strengthening or renewing the natural social bonds.[2] What I wish to emphasize is that the more important point is not how much salary a teacher or an elder may receive, but whether his appointment and the remuneration he receives tend to weaken the organic bonds of native society and to make difficult his relations with the folk group. Do the conditions of his position *ipso facto* place him or keep him outside the local group?

In seeking to lay among the Ovimbundu sure foundations for a truly indigenous Church, the importance of ties of kinship have probably been recognized by more than one missionary. The importance of stimulating local self-support both for its influence on building up the Church and on the development of indigenous leadership has long been stressed in mission circles, although it must be recognized that the principle has often been honoured rather in the breach than in the observance. While recognizing the value of these principles as long-term objectives, impatient of meagre immediate and visible 'results' or failing to realize how

[1] Gutmann; *Africa*, 1928, p. 443 f.

[2] e.g., see Eiselen in Schapera (ed.), *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa* (London, 1934), p. 81.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

geographic position in the centre of the colony has also made it harder for them to evade it. Nevertheless, many have emigrated. In 1941 and again in 1944, when the writer visited South Africa, he found thousands of Ovimbundu on the Rand and many more in the Rhodesias and the Congo. Many are also known to have gone to the South-West Territory and to Bechuanaland, and some even to such distant points as Natal's north coast and French Equatorial Africa.[1]

Recent Developments

Currency, in the sense of money, is quite a recent introduction to the Ovimbundu. To the end of their trading activities, cloth ('trade goods') was the standard of exchange. Although dependence upon world markets caused prices to fluctuate with the course of the rubber trade, as we have seen, there was not, however, the great range which follows the fluctuations of the money market through a course of inflation and deflation. The Ovimbundu had had some dealings in money before the time of World War I, when there was a silver coinage, so that the depreciation which set in about 1921 was all the more confusing to them. This is not the place to discuss the finances and banking of Angola, but it must be noted that the conversion of the 'Escudo' into the 'Angolar' in 1928 at the rate of Ag. 0,80 to Esc. 1$00 greatly increased the sense of confusion among the natives. This was only to be expected when the native tax remained at Ag. 80,00 where it was Esc. 80,00 before, whereas daily wages to contract labourers became Ag. 0,80 where before they were Esc. 1$00. The confusion was considerable.[2]

Taxes began to be levied soon after military occupation, but for some years they were very small, especially in relation to opportunities for earning. When the head-tax reached Esc. 80,00 it remained at that figure for some years. In 1935 a 'work tax' and

[1] This state of affairs is frequently and quite freely commented upon in the Angola papers. For a recent notice see local correspondence entitled 'Notícias do Cuma' in the *Voz do Planalto* (Nova Lisboa) for 17 Aug. 1946. One of the most serious recent indictments is contained in an article in *O Farolim*, Luanda, 5 Nov. 1945, by Padre J. Alves Correia. This distinguished writer asserts that the present labour policy is 'killing the goose which lays the golden egg'.

[2] For finance, currency, banking, and economic conditions in general, see Department of Overseas Trade, *Economic Conditions in Angola*, H.M.S.O., 1929. There are also reports for 1923 and 1925, but the one for 1929 covers the previous decade.

1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP13 Mbundu FP13

another small amount were added, so that it is now Ag. 91,00.[1] This is not high in comparison with the figures for the Union of South Africa and some other African territories, but opportunities for earning in Angola are small. Wages and prices of produce are low indeed. These problems of labour and of taxation are much the same in many South and Central African territories. Their present-day poverty bears very hardly upon the Ovimbundu who saw much more prosperous times in the days of their large-scale trading.

Land. The ownership and occupation of land by natives does not present the acute problem in Angola which it does in several African territories. Natives have not been herded on to reserves, for rigid segregation is not the Portuguese idea, nor has there yet been occupation of land by European settlers on a scale sufficient to encroach upon the land needed by natives, save in a few localities. A large proportion of the concessions provisionally taken out by Europeans in 1919–25 have reverted to the State for failure to meet requirements, as, for example, to bring a stated proportion under cultivation. Many schemes for European colonization in the Benguela Highland have been projected from time to time. The Portuguese law protects the native in his holdings, but since European settlers often find ways to circumvent the intent of the law, and since an increasing European colonization is apt to be a threat to native holdings, a simplification of the machinery whereby the natives may secure sure title to communal or to individual holdings is highly desirable.[2]

Whatever else may be said, however, it is good to be able to report that at the present time the Ovimbundu have their land. This fact has been a very important factor in their transition from

[1] About $4.00 at present exchange. In 1937 the economic year was changed to the calendar year, and in most districts payment of an extra half-year's tax was required. About 1941 the tax was again raised, to Ag. 108,00, and in 1945 it was again put up, to 120,00. These figures are for most of the districts inhabited by the Ovimbundu. In some areas, especially frontier areas, the amounts levied are considerably lower.

[2] For the present official status of the questions of administration, land, labour, &c., see Comte J. de Penha-Garcia, *Organisation politique et administrative de l'empire colonial portugais*, Inst. Col. Int'n'l (1936); ibid. (ed.), *Les Colonies portugaises* (1931); a useful summary of the same will be found in Lord Hailey, *An African Survey* (London: 1938), pp. 213–16, 796 f. There is a discussion of these problems in J. T. Tucker, *Angola, Land of the Blacksmith Prince* (1933), chap. 8. See also Valdez dos Santos, *Angola, Coração do Império* (Lisboa: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1945).

3: Hambly E-5 (1929-1930) 1934 FP13 Mbundu FP13

428 not entitled to inheritance of land, cattle, or anything else belonging to the dead man. The greater part of the property would be bequeathed to the eldest brother of the deceased's mother.

428 604 768 There appears to be discussion as to the distribution of property, but the maternal uncle is responsible for settling disputes. He himself has the first claim, and in Ngonga's words, "If there are quarrels about the cattle, land, and other things, the mother's eldest brother will settle them."

The mother's brother has rights over his sister's children even to the extent of pawning them to pay his own debts. On the other hand the maternal uncle is responsible for the conduct of his sister's children. He would have to pay fines incurred by thefts they committed, and he provides for his sister's son a wife who is either his daughter or his widow.

Ngonga stated that the maternal uncle does not invariably take all the property of a deceased nephew for himself. He may give something to the deceased's mother, the deceased's maternal grandfather, or to a brother of the deceased. Such gifts appear to be the outcome of good will on the part of the dead man's maternal uncle; [421] there is no compulsion. Women never inherit cattle or rights to the use of land.

423 692 622 The king is the head of the legal system, though his activities as such are not so great as those of the village headman (*sekulu*). The *olosekulu* (there are usually more than one) of a village witness the final act in a divorce ceremony. They used to have charge of trials for theft, murder, adultery, likewise the right of settling arguments concerning the ownership of land. It was the *sekulu* who distributed the land to the extended families when a new village site was opened. The maternal uncles settled the minor divisions among the limited families.

643 There are many kings among the Ovimbundu, but I thought that there was a tendency to confuse the titles of *osoma* ("king") and *sekulu* ("headman" or "chief" of a village). The jurisdiction of a king is so well known that any person is able to say under which king he lives. Ngonga said definitely that a man of the Ovimbundu who was under the jurisdiction of a certain king would have to obey the commands of a visiting king, provided they were not in any way disapproved of by the king to whom first allegiance was due.

643 [465] A chief may demand labor for the building of his house or the cultivation of his land. He does not pay for this but usually gives beer to the workers; sometimes he secures the labor and gives nothing in return.